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SUBJECT: UN: RUSSIA, CHINA VETO ZIMBABWE SANCTIONS
RESOLUTION

REF: USUN 619

¶1. (U) On July 11 Russia and China vetoed the adoption of the U.S.-authored draft Security Council resolution that would have imposed a comprehensive arms embargo on Zimbabwe and subjected fourteen senior members of the Zimbabwean government most responsible for the campaign of violence against the political opposition, including President Robert Mugabe, to an international asset freeze and travel ban. Nine delegations voted in favor of the resolution (the U.S., UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Panama, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, and Croatia), five delegations voted against (Russia, China, Viet Nam, South Africa and Libya), and Indonesia abstained. Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Italy, France, Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, the U.S. and the UK co-sponsored the text.

ZIMBABWE IMPUGNS UK MOTIVES

¶2. (U) Zimbabwe PermRep B.G. Chidyausiku, in a statement before the vote, asserted that Zimbabwe was "at peace with itself and its neighbors," and posed no threat to international peace and security. The resolution was therefore "a clear abuse of Chapter VII of the UN Charter." Chidyausiku said that reports on the violence in Zimbabwe had been "over-dramatized," and the proposed sanctions were "an expression of imperialist conquest" on the part of the UK and its allies, who viewed the results of the elections as unfavorable to UK interests. Chidyausiku asserted that the current U.S. and EU sanctions were responsible for the state of the Zimbabwean economy and had caused the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, who were willing to engage one another in an effort to resolve their problems.

SOUTH AFRICA, LIBYA, VIET NAM AND INDONESIA
ARGUE SANCTIONS ACTION ILLEGITIMATE

¶3. (U) Following Chidyausiku's statement, South African PermRep Dumisani Kumalo said that the talks between the GOZ leadership and the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had resumed on June 10 in South Africa. Kumalo called the elections "unfair and not transparent," but stated that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit on June 25 "called for the lifting of all sanctions" on Zimbabwe. He continued that SADC had decided that it would encourage the parties to honor their commitments to promote "peace, stability, democracy, and reconciliation," and that South Africa was obliged to follow the decisions of SADC and the African Union (AU), and therefore would vote against the resolution.

¶4. (U) Libyan Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi expressed concern with the tension between the parties, and pledged to work to

diffuse that tension in line with the AU's July 1 resolution on Zimbabwe. Dabbashi asserted that the situation did not present a threat to international peace and security, and this was an opinion confirmed by Zimbabwe's neighbors. He alleged that the draft text would violate Zimbabwe's sovereignty and represent interference in its internal affairs. Imposing sanctions would run counter to the "opinion of the international community" that sanctions are a tool of last resort, and would remove the incentive for one party (the MDC) to enter into further dialogue.

15. (U) Explaining Indonesia' abstention, DPR Hasan Kleib stated that his government was "appalled by the violence" and human rights abuses, but the draft resolution would neither promote dialogue and reconciliation, nor support regional efforts to solve the crisis. Viet Nam PermRep Minh said that in the absence of a threat to international peace and security, the imposition of Chapter VII sanctions would run counter to international law.

BURKINA FASO COMMITTED TO
PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE CONFLICT

16. (U) Burkina Faso PermRep Michel Kafando stated that the situation in Zimbabwe continued to worsen and it was a threat to peace in Southern Africa. Burkina Faso endorses the AU commitment to encouraging a dialogue to promote peace in Zimbabwe, but as a member of the Security Council, Burkina Faso "must also shoulder the responsibility to respond to any threat to international peace and security." The proposed

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arms embargo was designed to prevent a large-scale conflict, and the text had the support of Burkina Faso for this reason. Kafando argued that the adoption of the resolution would not have compromised or undermined a political settlement, but on the contrary would have encouraged one.

US AND UK SPAR WITH RUSSIA OVER POSITIONS

17. (U) Speaking immediately after the vote, UK PermRep John Sawers said that the Security Council had "failed to shoulder its responsibility to do what it (could) to prevent a national tragedy deepening, and spreading its effects across southern Africa." Rather than undermining the ongoing mediation efforts, the resolution would have required the GOZ to engage meaningfully with the mediation, and would have placed "countervailing pressure on the Mugabe regime to balance the pressure and intimidation it continues to exert on the political opposition." Sawers argued that the resolution was not an intrusion into Zimbabwe's internal affairs, as the Council has often determined that instability in one country has consequences for wider peace and stability. The Council had now lost the opportunity to impose a legal obligation on Mugabe to discontinue the violence, strengthen the mediation efforts, and impose an arms embargo. Sawers called Russia's position "inexplicable," noting that President Medvedev had supported the G8 statement to "take further steps, inter alia introducing financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for the violence." The vetoes of China and Russia were "deeply damaging to the long-term interests of Zimbabwe's people" and had harmed the prospects of an early end to the violence and oppression.

18. (U) Speaking next, Russian PermRep Vitaly Churkin criticized the "irresponsible and factually inaccurate" statement by the UK. Churkin said that there was no reference in the G8 statement to Security Council action, and that "all members (of the Council) knew this." Churkin characterized the draft resolution as an "illegitimate and dangerous" attempt to take action beyond the scope of the UN

Charter. The situation in Zimbabwe could not be solved, he continued, by "artificially elevating" it to a threat to international peace and security, and the initiative interfered in a national process. Furthermore, the draft ignored the ongoing discussion between the political parties in Zimbabwe and the position of the AU on the need to foster dialogue. Churkin said that the sponsors of the resolution had been warned that sanctions would deepen the crisis, and had missed an opportunity to develop a united Council approach on the way out of the crisis. Churkin added that the failure to adopt the resolution did not impact the international community's interest in resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe.

¶9. (U) Ambassador Khalilzad expressed U.S. disappointment that Russia and China prevented the Council from adopting a strong resolution condemning and sanctioning the violent regime of Robert Mugabe, and stated that, in blocking the resolution, China and Russia had stood with Mugabe against the people of Zimbabwe. Particularly surprising and disturbing, he said, was the reversal of the Russian position from a few days earlier during the G8 summit, when Russia had supported a G8 statement deploring that the Government of Zimbabwe had carried out elections on June 27 despite the violence and intimidation that prevented the conduct of free and fair elections, quoting the statement's commitment to further measures. "The Russian performance here today," Ambassador Khalilzad said, "raises questions about its reliability as a G8 partner." He cited UN Deputy Secretary-General Migiro's characterization of the situation in Zimbabwe as "the single greatest challenge to regional stability in southern Africa," and noted that the AU had expressed the "urgent need to prevent further worsening of the situation to avoid the spread of conflict." Ambassador Khalilzad noted that no substantive negotiations were underway between the Mugabe regime and the opposition, contrary to what had been reported by South Africa. Ambassador Khalilzad applauded Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone for standing up for the people of Zimbabwe by supporting the resolution, and pledged to continue to work with all Security Council members to monitor the situation in Zimbabwe and urge the SYG to appoint a representative to support the negotiation process.

¶10. (U) French PermRep Maurice Ripert said the violence continued, and the number of refugees was growing, threatening regional stability. The draft resolution would

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have provided the necessary pressure to bolster the political process and hold accountable those perpetrating that violence. Ripert stated that going forward it was important to ensure that democracy prevailed.

11 (U) Chinese PermRep Wang Guangya stated that China had "insurmountable difficulties" with the text, and asserted that at the G8 summit African leaders had clearly opposed the use of sanctions. This was not a threat to international peace and security, and the threat of sanctions would interfere with the dialogue between the parties, which China believed was the best approach to solving the crisis. Wang called on the parties to exercise restraint, and refrain from action that would lead to the further deterioration of the situation.

¶12. (U) Croatian PermRep Neven Jurica expressed deep regret over the defeat of the draft resolution, noting that the Council had failed to apply "long needed" pressure on Mugabe, and that the Council should not tolerate the use of violence "to distort democracy at the expense of the people." Costa Rican DPR Saul Wiesleder expressed regret for the vetoes, stating that the situation in Zimbabwe had dangerous implications for the region. He stated the fundamental importance that the will of the majority be respected, and noted that the elections had not met the minimum standards for fairness. Belgian DPR Olivier Belle stated that, despite

the regrettable outcome of the vote, the Council was still unanimous on the gravity of the situation and the need for a negotiated settlement. Panamanian PermRep Ricardo Arrias said that while Panama did not believe that the situation yet constituted a threat to international peace and security, it could soon become one and had voted for the resolution on those grounds. Italian DPR Aldo Mandovani stated concisely that the people of Zimbabwe should be able to express their legitimate political will.

AU, ANGOLA, AND TANZANIA ENCOURAGE
SUPPORTING DIALOGUE

113. (U) Angola, representing SADC, said that sanctions on one party could further complicate and damage the ongoing political dialogue, and that the international community should "give dialogue a chance." Tanzanian PermRep Augustine Mahiga said the Security Council should consider working in tandem with the AU as outlined in its recent resolution in particular by supporting SADC-led mediation. AU Ambassador Ratsifandrihamanana said that African leaders had taken full responsibility (for mediating the situation), and asked that no actions be taken that would have a negative impact on that mediation.

Khalilzad